

## REMARKS

Claims 1-13 and 15-18 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 7, 12, 13, 15 and 17 have been amended. Claim 14 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 18 is newly added. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The Office Action has objected to the drawing because Fig. 5 is of poor quality. A replacement sheet for Fig. 5 is being prepared for filing in a Supplemental Amendment to be filed shortly.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0072875 to Barney et al., hereafter Barney.

This rejection is traversed. The rejection is obviated by the amendment to independent claims 1 and 7. Amended independent claims 1 and 7 each recite:

“determining a predetermined synchronization interval and a rate of correction based on said predetermined synchronization interval and said determined time difference; and  
automatically adjusting said network communications network time to synchronize with said module reference time gradually, using said correction rate, over said predetermined synchronization interval”.

Barney does not disclose the determining step or the automatically adjusting step. For the case where the local time is faster than the official time, Barney always uses the time difference as an interval during which the local time is held until it is in synchronization with the official time. The time difference changes and is not a predetermined time. In fact, Barney does not disclose a step of determining a predetermined synchronization interval. Moreover, Barney

does not disclose a step of determining "a rate of correction based on said predetermined synchronization interval and said determined time difference". Furthermore, Barney does not disclose "automatically adjusting the communications network time.....using said correction rate over the predetermined synchronization interval".

For the reason set forth above, it is submitted that the rejection of claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Barney is obviated by the amendment and should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 12-17 under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over Barney in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,709,347 to Kirk, hereafter Kirk. This rejection is moot as to claim 14, which has been canceled.

Independent claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the language of canceled claim 14 and the amended language of independent claim 1. Therefore, for the reason set forth in the discussion of amended independent claim 1, Barney lacks the amended language of amended independent claim 12.

The deficiency of Barney is not supplied by Kirk, which was cited for a different reason.

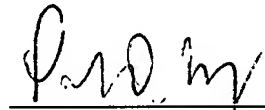
For the reason set forth above, it is submitted that the rejection of claims 12, 13 and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is obviated by the amendment and should be withdrawn.

Newly presented claim 18 is dependent on claim 12 and recites that the time synchronization function including the time synchronization interval operates on a periodic basis. Support for this language is found in the specification at page 14, lines 19-22, and page 15, lines 16-19. Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 18 distinguishes from the cited art and is, therefore, allowable.

It is respectfully requested for the reasons set forth above that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) and 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn, that claims 1-13 and 15-18 be allowed and that this application be passed to issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: 9/28/07



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